



INDEPENDENT LIVING RESOURCE CENTER

Promoting Equal Rights and Opportunities for All People With Disabilities Since 1989

Albuquerque Office
4665 Indian School NE
Suite 100
Albuquerque NM 87110

Phone: 1-800-260-5022 v/tty
(505) 266-5022 v/tty
Fax: (505) 266-5150

Moriarty Office
1208 Route 66, Suite E
P.O. Box 697
Moriarty, NM 87035

Phone: (505) 832-1128 v/tty
Fax: (505) 832-1153

Socorro Office
120 Plaza
P.O. Box 765
Socorro, NM 87801

Phone: 1-866-835-2486 v/tty
(575) 835-2486 v/tty
Fax: (575) 835-2972

Alamogordo Office
700 E. First Street, Suite 772
P.O. Box 553
Alamogordo, NM 88310

Phone: 1-877-439-1112 v/tty
(575) 439-1112 v/tty
Fax: (575) 439-1113

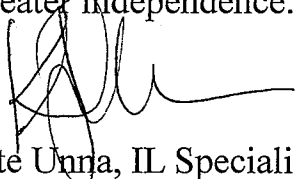
Disability Concerns Subcommittee September 25 2015

As a New Mexico native with a disability, I am deeply committed to improving the lives of people with disabilities. As an IL Specialist working in Albuquerque but serving some distant communities, we struggle to provide core services to our consumers. Our IL Center is staffed by 51% disabled people, and we serve as reminders that disabled people are an asset to any company, providing much needed diversity of experience and ability.

One concern I had growing up was how I would support myself—at one point I was fired from a local restaurant because hiring me, a person with childhood rheumatoid arthritis was, in the words of the manager, like “hiring someone without arms”. This is a common experience among people with disabilities—we experience denigration from our employers, who can be reluctant to make a reasonable accommodation or are simply never hired in the first place. Many people like me seek Social Security benefits as a way to make a living for themselves, and the typical two year process can be so tedious, oppressive and downright depressing, it is no wonder that many people are understandably anxious to seek employment at a later date.

Part of my position at ILRC is to aid my consumers in finding appropriate, fulfilling and meaningful work, and to take some of the anxiety out of the process. I am currently working with seven people who are looking to get off benefits and get back to work, many of whom are in their twenties and thirties like me. I am also working with four people who are contesting overpayments by SSA to the tune of \$15K to \$50K, most of the overpayments were incurred by working while receiving disability benefits. Part of my job is educating my consumers, showing them the published information in SSA’s Red Book, and part of my job is working with SSA to make the process more accessible to those with literacy or language issues.

I look forward to the Disability Concerns Subcommittee’s continued support in helping people with disabilities seek out meaningful work and achieving greater independence.



Kate Unna, IL Specialist ILRC